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AUTHOR Fay, Carolyn
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ABSTRACT

Interviews were conducted with teachers who chaired the steering committees for 3 of the 25 National Education Association Mastery in Learning (MIL) Project schools with the purpose of eliciting their viewpoints on teacher empowerment and leadership. The schools (Orchards Elementary School in Lewiston, Idaho; Willow Creek Junior High in Rochester, Minnesota; and Maryvale High School in Phoenix, Arizona) were chosen as a representative cross-section offering three different levels of schooling, three different settings (urban, suburban, rural), and faculties of differing sizes. Of particular interest were the teacher's views on how they combined their teaching role with the leadership role, how one affected the other, and how their expanded roles were viewed by their colleagues. Four common themes emerged from interviews and observations: (1) time and teacher leadership; (2) effects of teaching mission and leadership upon one another; (3) teacher leadership and collegial relationships; and (4) differences between teacher leadership and administration. Different views held by the MIL teacher leaders on these themes are reported. It is recommended that study of teacher leadership should be increased and directly involve teacher leaders themselves. It is also recommended that professional development programs be designed for practicing and aspiring teacher leaders. (JD)

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TEACHING AND LEADING: IN THE TEACHER'S VOICE

Carolyn Fay
Indiana University

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TEACHING AND LEADING: IN THE TEACHERS' VOICE

Background

Increasing recognition of the inherent leadership qualities in classroom teachers has led to deeper study of teacher leadership and the potential for teacher responsibility and authority in shaping climate and curriculum in their schools.

In fact, teacher leadership is a strong indicator of one of the more recent educational reform imperatives--teacher empowerment (Fay, 1989). These reform imperatives have evolved from "first order" change, concerned with control and regulations, to a second order of "new goals, structures and roles" (Cuban, 1988, p. 344).

Many reformers state that teacher empowerment is essential to this second order change, often termed school restructuring. And yet, empowered teachers are not generally found in American public schools as they are structured today, despite research demonstrating the importance of teacher empowerment and autonomy and despite attempts to include teachers at the decision-making table (Rice, 1987).

Indeed, Maeroff (1988b) points out that the "centrality of the teacher's role in determining what happens in schools...is often ignored in the recommendations for improving schools" (p.1). And Boyer (1988) states that today's teachers may have gained in competency and responsibility, but they lack "empowerment to shape curricula, programs and policy" (p.66). Frymier (1989) goes further, describing teachers as "neutered."

Teacher leadership and conditions for empowerment

For their empowerment, teachers must achieve "status, knowledge and access to decision making" (Maeroff, 1988a, p.473). Development of an "internalized locus of control" and freedom from bureaucratic routinization (Frymier) are other forms of empowerment allowing teachers the capability to directly address matters of teaching and learning, still most teachers' primary concerns (Johnston and Germinario, 1986).

It may well be that genuine teacher empowerment depends upon practitioners determining the very conditions that foster empowerment by developing new beliefs about their ability to lead colleagues in school change. "Involving people authentically in dealing with their own professional lives...real participation by teachers reflecting their vision of participation" is one way Ann Lieberman describes teacher empowerment (Brandt, 1989). Teachers who actively create their own visions of empowerment and leadership, refusing the imposition of others' versions, will ensure two essentials in expanding their role: appropriateness and ownership.

Leadership roles empower teachers to actualize their professional worth in concrete, fundamental ways: sharing their unique experience and expertise with one another, developing new skills with their colleagues for improving their schools, and designing actual roles that promote these functions and maintain the centrality of their teaching.

Professionalism, teacher leadership and the bureaucracy

Most discussion of teacher leadership does not attempt to compare, in any way, these new expanded roles with those of typical school administrators. It seems clear that teachers do not see leadership as others traditionally have--as a "higher" place in the organizational hierarchy. Their sense of professionalism keeps their leadership tied directly to what affects their students. "Teachers place high value on their work with students. They do not desire upward movement in the organization...into administration" (Devaney, 1987, p. 9).

Teachers do indeed want to stay close to their students and each other, and they see administration as distant from both. Further, they are generally uncomfortable with "incentive" plans, based on competition, that reward only a few teachers. School observers have noted that teachers thrive best in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration:

It is hard to detect a groundswell of support from teachers for most of the career-ladder proposals; policy makers...and researchers have been the most vocal advocates. The element of competition contained in career ladder plans may be only one of several reasons for their lukewarm reception from teachers. The 'promotion and advancement' vision of career reflected in such plans does not necessarily match teachers' conceptions of career" (Little, 1988, p.80).

Teaching is demeaned by a hierarchy that views leaving the classroom as a "promotion." Devaney (1987) stresses the danger of confusing empowerment with rank:

The objective must be to improve the effectiveness and commitment of all teachers. The lead teacher position must be an

organizational and workplace reform, not just a career ladder. Otherwise, it will be resisted by teachers who see the lead teacher as one more person in the hierarchy empowered to tell them what to do and positioned above them on the bureaucratic ladder" (p.16).

Teachers, then, do not confuse their ideas of expanded leadership roles with with "rising in the ranks." But others may. Lieberman (1988) warns that "the move to professionalize teaching will inevitably conflict with the bureaucratic orientation of schools and of schoolpeople who have held positions of authority in the hierarchy" (p. 649).

But for teachers to realize a new sense of professionalism, traditional bureaucratic structures can no longer serve as governance models. Teacher authority in the substance of school will need to be clearly differentiated from organizational or managerial authority (Erlandson and Bifano, 1987).

Teachers who gain autonomy and control of their professsion can thus genuinely transform "the manner in which administrators interact with the teaching staff" (Pratte and Rury, p. 72). True collegueship and partnership between teachers and principals can result, according to Barth (1988), when the solitary authority of the principal is replaced with the collective authority of the faculty and school becomes "a community of leaders, a place whose very mission is to insure that students, parents, teachers, and principals all become school leaders in some ways and at some times" (p. 640).

Teacher interest and teacher voice

Some educators see teachers as unwilling to take any formal responsibility for school governance. It is difficult, however, even to estimate how many teachers want what kind of decision-making or actual leadership responsibility. It is safe to say that not all teachers are equally desirous or capable of significant participation, nor are all decisions of equal importance to those who do choose to participate. According to Alutto and Belasco (1972), teachers can become saturated with decisional involvement. (This study which follows, however, finds that teacher leaders trace this saturation not so much to lack of desire or ability as to a simple lack of time in the teaching day as it is structured. All those interviewed address the need to examine different uses of time.)

Purpose of study

Both the concept and the language of teacher empowerment sound positive to teacher readers of recent reform literature. All too soon, however, the familiar absence of practicing teachers' voices--even in the discussion of their own empowerment--is apparent.

Talking about teachers without talking to them or with them--as if they exist only in the third-person--is an unfortunately common practice among many educators. But discussing teacher empowerment without including teachers as active participants in the dialogue seems so inappropriate as to be ludicrous, when this "power" is so obviously and so intrinsically theirs, by virtue

of their direct work with students and thus, one would think, theirs to shape and use.

Some teacher leaders clearly have been able and willing to try to forge new roles, responsibilities and working relationships for themselves. What do they think? What do they and their colleagues say? The only appropriate source, it seemed to me, for determining teachers' perceptions regarding empowerment and leadership roles would be teachers themselves, especially teacher leaders. Thus it was that I determined to go to practicing teachers who were empowered with new leadership roles in their schools, and hear them, in their own words, talk about this form of empowerment and what it meant to them. I was particularly interested in how they combined their teaching role with the newer one of leadership, how one affected the other and how their expanded roles were viewed by their colleagues.

Description of sample

Bob McClure of NEA's Mastery in Learning Program was aware of my interest in eliciting teachers' viewpoints on teacher empowerment/leadership. He invited me to come to NEA to talk about conducting my study in a few of the MIL schools. I was happy to do so for a number of reasons:

- 1) I had wanted to interview and observe teachers working at the three levels of elementary, middle/junior high and secondary, to cross urban and suburban lines into rural areas, and to include faculties of differing sizes. The "sample" offered by McClure looked good to me. Orchards Elementary School

(Lewiston, Idaho) could be termed small. Willow Creek Junior High (Rochester, Minnesota) is relatively midsized. And Maryvale High School (Phoenix, Arizona) is a big complex of various buildings that sprawls over what everyone calls a campus.

2) Aside from the broad perspective that a national program--twenty-five schools are participating in the MIL Project--lent to my inquiry, I could also depend on certain conditions that I felt NEA would have determined in the schools and faculties in the project: voluntary participation of teachers; district commitment and principal's agreement for school involvement; a research base, including teacher assessment of school needs, for restructuring efforts; and most important to me, faculty selection of the teacher leadership for the project.

We agreed to go ahead. McClure communicated a request to Maryvale, Orchards and Willow Creek via PSinet, the electronic network NEA had set up for the schools in the project. We got a yes from all three.

Methodology

The faculties in each of the three MIL schools I studied had elected colleagues to chair what were called Steering Committees. Led by this chair (at Willow Creek, two teachers were elected as co-chairs), these committees literally steered faculty and staff participation in MIL project.

I sent the teacher chairs of each Steering Committee a short description of my study's purpose and followed it up with calls to their homes. It made good sense to me to ask these Steering

Committee Chairs to be the primary respondents in my inquiry and, further, to select colleagues in their schools who wished to participate in the study by sharing their views on teacher empowerment. These other teachers eventually supplied valuable insights that added texture and color to the stories of the colleagues whom they had elected as their leaders. We agreed that I might use a tape recorder; respondents would be able to review the transcripts and strike parts they felt uncomfortable with. I spent anywhere from twelve to thirty hours in individual interviews during each of the two visits to the three schools. I also observed and participated in a number of group settings; they ranged from sitting in on team planning time to attending faculty meetings, from a TGIF gathering of local association reps at a local bar to a crafts fair in a small mountain town, from a school improvement session on a hot Friday afternoon to dinner in the Steering Committee chair's home. Still, in no way would I say I knew the schools, or even the teachers that I spent the most time with. What I would say is that we talked as my colleagues at home and I talk--as professionals. That was what I wanted.

During individual interviews, I took notes to supplement the tape recordings. In formal group meetings, notes alone had to suffice. In informal settings, I wrote my observations after I left the teachers.

Problems

From the phone calls to the Steering Committees chairs, I sensed that they had a tremendous feel for the importance of time and great care in the ways they used it. Above all, I wanted to acknowledge and honor the gift of their time. That then was my first concern: to keep my inquiry as brief and focused as possible while allowing enough time for the interview process to work--to get comfortable with the subject, to digress, to check for understanding. Teachers--I was one for fifteen years, and have worked directly with them for another ten--quickly sense when their time is being wasted, good intentions notwithstanding. I did not want to do that, nor did I want to ignore the norms of the schools I was visiting. So, for the all-important interview schedule and settings, I went with the judgment of my primary respondents, even though they set up certain times and situations that appeared less than ideal to me. I needn't have worried. Practitioner wisdom did not fail me. Respondents and interview settings were smoothly matched.

(The only real difficulty occurred during an interview in a Chinese restaurant, where one teacher had suggested we meet after school. My limited experience in using a tape recorder had not prepared me for the playback shocks of restaurant buzz, the clatter of our tableware, and our own incidental comments--"Try some of my pork"--that interspersed serious conversation about professional responsibilities, the occasional colleagues who do not measure up to them, and the lack of courage and ability we often feel in failing to do something about it.)

Another problem is one I suspect most persons attempting a naturalistic inquiry encounter. Honoring the respondents' emerging concerns while keeping to the stated purpose of the

report was quite a feat for me. I cannot say even now if I succeeded. However, the topic and the concerns seemed to enrich one another, a nice surprise.

I was also fearful that my writing might not do justice to these teachers, that the report would be like others I had read about teachers and teaching, with an unengaging format and style, and findings that generally did not speak to practitioners. A sense of real life was often lacking in such articles. I simply did not know many, if any, teachers like the objects in these studies. My final concern, then, was to construct situations that best allowed teachers to talk as they wanted, and to capture insights that, in my opinion, hadn't been expressed in ways that might engage other teachers. I wanted fresh views, straight from practitioners, on topics that not only affected them but that, in fact, were actually generated by them and their work. Could they express these views? Could I capture them?

The Mastery in Learning sites: Similarities and differences

Although all of the teacher leaders (Steering Committee Chairs) at the three MIL sites employed similar methods and instruments for assessing faculty determination of school need, each used individual interests and skills in leading the project to meet those needs. The focus at each site thus developed in completely different ways. Nevertheless, the MIL teacher leaders experienced a number of similar concerns:

- 1) how their new leadership role was perceived and received by faculty colleagues

2) how teaching mission and leadership function affected one another

3) how to distinguish teacher leadership

from existing administrative roles and traditional uses of power.

What follows are descriptions of the leadership of the MIL Project at the three school sites and of the similarities and differences in the ways their teacher leadership concerns evolved.

Maryvale

Maryvale is a large urban high school with a seasoned faculty and a heterogeneous student body. As my taxi turned in the driveway that first April morning, the school had already come to life. Students thronged the inner courtyard at the center of the complex, slamming lockers and giving the vending machines a good workout. Teachers finished their coffee as they walked to meet their first period classes.

After the bell rang, I found the main office, looked over the teacher schedule and then walked across the now deserted courtyard to the media center to prepare for my first interview. A small band of birds swooped for crumbs left by the morning snackers. Only this rather charming exception kept me from the feeling that I could have been in almost any of the urban secondary settings I have known and worked in. High school commonplaces were alive and well at Maryvale. I wondered then what differences there were here, whether I would discover them and whether newly empowered leadership had made the differences.

MIL Leadership at Maryvale

The MIL Project at Maryvale superseded an existing school improvement effort which had been system initiated and administratively directed.

Julia, the Maryvale Steering Committee Chair, was the school's media center director and had no regular classroom responsibilities; this position, according to her, afforded observations and interactions that gave rise to a view of school need different from what a classroom teacher's might be. This fact and another--Julia had completed doctoral studies which had sharpened her interest and skills in research--played important parts in her leadership and faculty response to it.

Faculty response

Reactions to the MIL project and its leadership were mixed from the beginning. Faculty members who had been influential in the earlier school improvement program saw MIL as somewhat of an upstart process, through which a new type of leadership had surfaced and made itself felt. One career teacher, Nathan, felt he represented other teachers' views when he said:

The MIL process has been manipulated not only to get things through that they want to do but to keep out things that they don't want.

An even more fundamental problem, according to this same teacher, was the fact that Julia was not a classroom teacher:

There is some dissatisfaction on campus with some of the leadership. The last few years we have had (in leadership of the MIL project) people who have not been in the classroom. There is some resentment on the part of classroom teachers that these people don't

understand the classroom any more, that they've got a pretty soft job.

Julia's leadership was hampered, according to Nathan, because she lacked a classroom teacher's viewpoint. Her efforts to bring about change in school climate, student learning styles and governance are fine, he said, but first things first. And from his classroom teacher's perspective, the first thing is the curriculum.

Where does restructuring begin?

Nathan stated a variation of a common refrain that I hear over and over again, from teachers at all levels. School "restructuring" needs to start at what they consider the heart of teaching--the curriculum:

I think that trying to involve people is fine, but...we are neglecting other areas....Our curriculum is being allowed to drift. We don't have the structure in place in our department to have ongoing curriculum development.

Meanings of "curriculum" vary widely but, however they define it, most teachers see it as an absolutely vital link between them and their students. Curriculum is what teachers see themselves as most knowledgeable about--and, conversely, what they seldom have any control over. Nathan continued:

Look at the master schedule. Everybody is plugged into a slot every period of the day and you are plugged into a slot by yourself. There is nobody but you. Our department is just a bunch of individuals with the chair running around trying to keep us in supplies and that is about it. Curriculum is compiled and passed down by people no longer in the classroom without collegial consensus and support.

Empowerment and leadership

Nathan defines empowerment as "the ability, based on practice and expertise, to make decisions about matters closest to his classroom work with students: determining who teaches what, to whom, when and why." All else is secondary, even extraneous. And he sees leadership as a force able to understand that essential focus and organize change around it:

The one thing that brings us all together is the student. Somebody somewhere has to sit down and establish policy and the primary focus has to be the student and the course we want them to run. I think the curriculum has to drive the whole system of education.

Different approaches: Julia's view

Julia does not so much dismiss this central concern of teachers, as she does their approach to it. Her dealings with students in the media center allow her to see needs, she says, that go beyond the curriculum to the students themselves. And classroom teachers are often too mired in content issues to discern these needs, according to her.

One of Julia's tacks as leader was an effort to engage Maryvale teachers in reading research. She was confident in this approach: "The surveys I sent out showed [the teachers] had an interest in talking with other teachers about educational issues rather than content areas." Her well-written encapsulations--sent out as "Research Updates"--covered the waterfront: effective schools, motivation, teaching/learning styles, class size, at-risk students, cooperative learning, ability grouping, school culture, homework, dropouts, burnout, technology, etc.

Faculty decision

The teachers at Maryvale were generous in their praise of Julia's ability to go after and compile information that was readable and current and research-based. A good number of them were, in fact, favorable towards the project in general.

However, such positive reactions were not enough to win for her the widespread colleague support essential for successful teacher leadership. Less than two weeks after I was at Maryvale, the faculty voted against participating for a third year in the MIL project, thereby ending the position of Steering Committee Chair, and in effect, Julia's leadership role in the faculty.

What happened? Was Julia's vision of leadership different from the faculty's? And if so, how?

Leadership styles

By her own admission, Julia saw leadership more as an individual than a shared endeavor. "Power" is held as a personal utility. Her version depicts the traditional administrator, not a teacher leader:

I've always been a leader. The person who does the work gets the power. If you don't do managerial and even clerical tasks, you lose it. When you do the tasks, you take on the role. To assign it to someone else, you run the risk of not being effective.

Julia's picture has accurate points. However, it lacks an essential sense of leadership, just as the next passage misses the essence of teaching. Both are telling as to the difficulties she experienced in extending her acknowledged capabilities as media specialist/research expert to successful leadership of the

faculty. Few career teachers would embrace her following description; a good many might resent it:

Leadership causes quality people to move out. As we excite teachers about the their potential (for other responsibilities) they are no longer satisfied with their role in the classroom. Think about it, a better desk, a better chair, a telephone, a clerk, even a secretary. You do not wait for a bell. You don't have to hurt for those kids day after day. I couldn't cope with that pain.

New leadership

Had Julia measured the intensity of faculty needs more perceptively, she would have probably found that, although research findings were of interest to the teachers, deeper and closer concerns existed that had to be dealt with first. Time-consuming as it may be, achieving faculty consensus and then leading faculty-initiated change are accomplishable processes. The ability to understand and accept where a faculty stands is not only helpful but essential for faculty leadership.

It appears that help is on its way at Maryvale. Beth, the classroom teacher who shortly took over the school leadership role from Julia, saw leadership in a different, more teacher-oriented light. Wary of aspects of traditional administrative leadership that have long held negative connotations for teachers, Beth wanted no part of "authoritative situations that have to do with power." Her understanding of differences among teachers and the burden of their work is clear:

There is no way you can impose anything on the faculty the way they are working now. We have to improve communication, understand

better about adult learning and increase collegiality and unity. The faculty all have very different philosophies, very different ideas about improvement and there is a lot of division--about how you handle kids, the teacher-student relationship and the teacher mission. We've got to accept that and go with it.

With rare sympathy and respect, Beth described certain non-involved faculty, in particular veteran teachers nearing the end of their careers:

Many have been teaching a very long time. Perhaps at their time and in their period they did give a lot, and they have justified it that they are not going to anymore. They have paid their dues. Only a very small percentage of teachers are the kind we see suffering daily, really unhappy. A far larger percentage, maybe just a few years from retirement, are still interested. You can see it when you talk to them. They're still interested in what is going on because they know what is going on still affects them. But they do not want to participate, or "improve" because they are tired, or they just feel they cannot. By tired, I mean they feel like they have paid their dues already.

Beth doesn't write off these teachers, but acknowledges their value and their right to be recognized for what they've done throughout their careers. She envisions working with them:

You tap their knowledge and experience and give them an opportunity in a forum to just share their ideas. I think it would start like a one on one. For example, in my leadership role, I would approach these teachers: "I would really like for you to be involved," and ask them how they might want to contribute, give them options. Maybe I would be too shy, just to come up like that, but maybe getting to know them and then lead into it. I am not sure how I would approach it but [I would find] a way for them to be involved. Everyone has something to offer.

(Beth is in her first year of leadership at Maryvale. Data analysis from this site is still in progress.)

Willow Creek

It was a cool, grey morning when Kat, a 7th grade home ec teacher, picked me up at my motel. The co-chair of the MIL Steering Committee, she would be one of my primary respondents. We soon drove into the parking lot of Willow Creek Junior High, a modern structure, solid and rather somber in appearance. It looked like its conservative community, which is home to the Mayo Clinic and a large arm of IBM. Thus, I wasn't prepared for the riot of primary colors that coursed over the building, on pipe railings in the large open foyer, in stairwells, on window and door trim of offices and library, cafeteria and locker areas.

Kat took me into a home ec room--more warmth, more brightness. We sat down and began to talk. Her words spilled out, too fast for me to take good notes.

(I was grateful for the little tape recorder, and happy that it seemed to bother no one during many hours of interviewing at all three schools. Somewhere it must be said, and it may as well be here. I see teachers starved for opportunities to talk about their profession, their ideas, and their students. Besides the constant pressure of time, there is simply so much to say that is so hard to express, to explain. Even so, it seems preposterous that there are so few seem willing and able to listen, that there is no structure for deep and continuing dialogue between people vital to each other--and to the students they teach.)

Empowerment: Teaching and working together

Kat's opening remark set the tone for the rest of the

conversations we were to have: "One of the signs of empowerment is that I can do this [leadership] right along with being in the classroom." For her, empowerment was not at all external to her teaching, but rather an integral part of it. The classroom was still the main arena. Confident about her own teaching, Kat relished joining her efforts with those of her colleagues. The willingness to team and to share, she thinks, is another sign of empowered teachers, and essential for a faculty attempting to reach a common vision:

I've always felt the need to look closely at what my teaching is. But empowerment also comes from working with others in the department who will share and team. I like best finding interdisciplinary ways to solve issues, whether it's for the student or for the whole school. MIL has allowed us to ask ourselves, "What if we had our best wish come true?" We haven't always thought that way, but now we can. MIL gave us the feeling that we aren't as locked in. We are no longer saying that we have no control over things [although] there are some things that we still can't do much about. But the importance of what I--what we--say as teachers--that's growing. That's why we have a tremendous responsibility to watch what we say. We do have a power that we didn't. It's come from working together and finding more common purposes."

Practical about some of the tougher aspects of teaming and sharing, Kat noted that teachers haven't even had time for just socializing, much less practice in talking about issues that are based in teaching values rarely expressed to each other:

Most of us haven't been used to having our ways questioned. To be able to accept that there may be a different way that is better, that's another sign of empowerment. We are still learning to talk with each other about

this. As we began to make our voices heard, it was hurtful at first. We aren't prepared for this. But we need to do it--to build a process so that we can say our minds in a kind way.

Think of the complexity, for instance, involved in a Steering Committee discussion that must include and address litter in the halls (as one contingent's chief gripe) to tougher topics like scheduling time differently (everybody is vested in this) to more personal and sensitive issues like: "Some feel they're carrying the burden for all."

Kat's skills, even as she admits the need to hone them, are backed by her familiarity and acceptance of the little woes and large differences that bedevil any group of professionals working together in a new way. Credibility is bolstered by her obvious concern for the group's impact on the general good:

We just kept on going, trying to keep in touch with monthly meetings, keeping the agenda open for all. When I feel worst is when we have too many focus points. That's when litter gets handled accordingly. It's not a put down, but priorities become clear when we keep asking, "What's best for Willow?"

Leadership of this kind, able to balance faculty feelings and individual needs against a larger a sense of school mission, is distinctly teacher-like.

How teaching and leading affect each other

Kat has given plenty of thought to teaching and, increasingly, how teaching and leading affect one another. That a classroom perspective enhances teacher leadership is clear to her: "The classroom keeps my focus, it gives credibility. They

can say, 'She knows--she's there.'" Kat also offered a look at the flip side--at what leading does to teaching:

"If teachers don't develop leadership skills, I don't believe they can do as well in the classroom. We're preparing our kids to question, give input and make choices. Don't we have to model that for them in the way we do our own work?"

Kat saw her first responsibility to her students, yet she took very seriously her charge of elected leadership. In asking herself, "Was that hour just spent on leadership or is it related to one of my classes?" she often found the lines blurred; the answer can be both. Ordering and managing time for both roles are problems for Kat. "Focusing more and then building a framework" to increase faculty collaboration can lessen the double load of teaching and leadership, but the balancing act takes its toll: "You can wear out pretty fast." And if she can't do both well, Kat is positive about one thing: "If I have to go into administration to do what I want to do--I just won't."

Teacher leadership and administration

Although teachers may not articulate it as such, they have an instinctual feel for the difference between administration and leadership. Certain opinions expressed by Kat seem valuable for further exploration.

First, she sees that administrative training as creating a certain aura that simply does not fit with a teacher culture:

It's almost like they have to wear a label that says, "I should know." And they begin to believe it. As a teacher there's a lot I know and a lot I don't know. I'm comfortable with that.

Next, Kat acknowledges the single biggest waste of the single biggest resource we have in education--teacher expertise and teacher wisdom:

There are also lots of things I'm good at. Aren't they missing a lot of expertise when one group of people spends so much time making decisions, without being tuned into kids and teachers? Why don't they come out here and interact? They get so tied to specifics, like this or that "learner-based outcome." We could work together--I'd be willing to team with an administrator--on something like exploring with our students what it is to grow old in this community.

Leadership and empowerment

Co-chairing the Steering Committee with Kat is Jim, a special ed teacher. His thinking is that teacher empowerment and leadership demand change in the way teachers--and he includes himself--work, not only with students but with each other. Jim's conversation, like Kat's, is sprinkled with "teaming" and "sharing." He focuses on the everlasting problem of teacher isolation, and the need to get teachers to work together to effect their own changes as to serve as models for their students: "How am I going to teach kids to work together on an assembly line if I persist in just doing my own thing?" Jim knows, too, the present horrendous waste of talent that, with more conscious collaboration, teachers could "bottle and share."

Acknowledging that some colleagues find new viewpoints and new practices difficult, Jim traces this not to indifference--a charge often leveled at teachers--but to school structures that deny teachers the time they demand for careful experimentation

with new ideas:

Sure, some of the faculty possibly have no desire for leadership, but I think at least half of the teachers are willing to take on a lot more responsibility, to share and to do their thing differently. But they must be met halfway in terms of time. And I don't think that's a cop-out.

Jim next notes an important distinction between teacher leadership and teacher empowerment. Leadership is inherent in the teaching role, embedded in a teacher collegiality, as often tacit as expressed. However, many teacher leaders finally conclude that empowerment, or a sense of real efficacy, demands an enabling structure in which their leadership can be expressed.

The lack of positional power in teachers' leadership bothers Jim. Teachers' classroom autonomy fades outside those walls, and as for actual power to "make things move", he says,

We don't have control over the essential things [like getting the time]. Our hands are still tied in terms of getting people to give us certain roles. [Authority] has to come from above--as though it is not going to mean as much if any one of us in the building said it. I have a hard time with that. Why should it mean anything more coming from the principal than from the home ec teacher or the art teacher?

Leadership, the teacher mission, and time

The necessity of reducing or leaving entirely direct work with students to find time for leadership presents another problem for Jim. He returns to the issue of time and the conflict experienced by teachers who decided they had to move into administration to "get things done:"

There has to be a different way to look at

the time we have available. I think any ...teacher who has moved into administration has felt this conflict: "I am getting away from being with the students, [where] I can see the immediate effect and where I want to be. On the other hand, if I can get myself in a situation where I am the one making decisions, that can affect my students...."

This old argument is based on a choice that may not have to be made much longer. Teachers may soon be able to make decisions affecting their students and also stay with those students, in schools with newly organized structures that empower teachers to assume leadership roles.

Jim saw collegial response and reaction as critical to teacher leaders' success, mentioning an informal but powerful check and balance that faculty teams exercise to keep their leadership on target. He didn't worry about "straying."

Your colleagues won't let you. That's the thing that I think will work.... Your colleagues will let you know one way or another that you're getting too far off the stream of what the team wants you to do.

Orchards

I had to fly to Seattle and then back across Washington to land in Lewiston, Idaho. The little town was not only literally remote, but its rich, rolling hills along the Snake River emanated an air of other-worldliness.

It was easy to find Orchards Elementary School. Well-named, it lies above Lewiston in an area of fruit orchards. Sheep with their lambs grazed in a small yard only a stone's throw from the school's playground.

No students or teachers appeared to have arrived yet, but

the principal met me at the door. We went to the faculty lounge for a cup of coffee; a huge urn had already finished perking, ready for incoming faculty and staff. I soon left to find the MIL Steering Committee Chair.

Gayle was alone in her classroom, already at work--it was not yet 7:30--arranging displays for the day's lessons. This picture remains with me, all the more vivid by a remark she made later that exemplified her energy in combining leadership with the joy and the rigors of teaching:

I do my best job every day and I don't have any days I don't like. I don't have any days that I don't want to come to work.

Our interviews were sprinkled with the word "confidence." If anything informed Gayle's sense of empowerment and teacher leadership, it was a sense of confidence--in the effects of leadership on her teaching and in the special quality that her continuing teaching gave her leadership. She credits the teacher association with developing this confidence:

It made a difference in my entire life--I learned leadership through the Association and, in fact, I became a better teacher because of that. They gave me confidence, and a lot of it came from information. You cannot be confident about yourself and your ability if you don't have information.

The state of teachers and teaching

Gayle believes in her colleagues, veterans and new teachers alike, stating that "society should be grateful for the strength and quality" that have come and are still coming--for whatever reason--into the profession. Nevertheless, she admits that

typical school governance structures have encouraged "stagnant and blase" attitudes in some teachers, keeping them uninformed and thus seemingly uninterested in change--"before this program most teachers didn't understand there was a reform movement going." Another reason she gives for this condition is the gender factor--the profession's high composition of women--that is especially powerful in elementary schools:

It's right and proper and easier [for many teachers] to be directed what to do--"I really don't have time for that. I have to teach school. I don't want to figure out how to schedule the lunch room. Tell me what to do and I am going to do it."

New attitudes, democratic classrooms and teacher leadership

Even so, the number of women teachers with this traditional attitude is diminishing. Younger women teachers, Gayle says, come from a newer, different culture that sees direction from a single source of authority as neither necessary nor helpful. Drawing a parallel between democratic classrooms and democratic schools, Gayle explains that just as children are no longer responding well to autocratic teachers, so teachers can no longer work effectively with autocratic administrators:

Teachers...no longer accept being led autocratically. The whole idea of shared decision making has to come down to better teaching--and better learners.

Leadership development for teachers

If teachers do then need leadership roles to make schools more democratic as well as to "learn their potential," Gayle makes a strong case for more formal leadership development for

teachers. She includes the need for such practical training as skills in interpersonal relations and communication:

The first thing we did was to have a communications skills workshop. When we did our survey, that was one of the things we needed. Even though we thought we were a good working faculty, we did lack that.

Gayle stressed that learning to relate with the public, developing community and corporate consensus about the mission of schooling is also necessary for teacher leaders, whose typical education does not include study of organization development, public/governmental relations, or adult learning:

When I went into education, I thought education led society. I think we need to take a leadership role, ~~we~~ need to describe the problem, and give the public our idea of what could be. The description should come from us; it is our job as educators to educate them. If we told everyone the story, they would be with us. Everybody wants the same thing--the very best for the children of this country. We are just fighting about how to get there. We have all failed on that.

Teacher leaders and administration

Many teacher leaders share a sentiment Gayle expressed about the lack of desire they feel for an administrative career. And yet, to "make things happen," with direct impact on teaching and learning, some practitioners have reluctantly left teaching--a profound choice, with profound implications. Leadership loses those teachers who will not leave; the students lose those who feel they must. Gayle would not leave and is firm about the need for new kinds of leadership development:

I once thought about being an administrator. I took one administration class. I never

would be an administrator. The kind of information and skills I'm talking about (for teacher leadership) is not for becoming anything; it clearly is for career teachers.

Time and leadership

All teacher leadership talk eventually devolves to the topic of time, and Gayle is no exception. She disputed the widely held perception that teachers are not "committed" simply because they do not find time for tasks and responsibilities that are added on to a full teaching load:

"There is high commitment among teachers for their own leadership and each other's, but there are only so many hours in the day. They have to change the amount of time we're spending in the classroom. I think we could find real correlation between giving teachers the time to become informed, to improve their workplace, to develop leadership skills, and every child in their classrooms benefitting."

Another knot in this problem is that time for leadership often equals time away from the classroom; teacher leaders take a lot of criticism from principals, fellow teachers and parents over "missing" school. Her concern has a personal side to it, but she is clear about the necessity of viewing time differently:

I have taken some flack for it (leaving the classroom for committee work and attendance at conferences) but I feel real firm about it. I feel that in myself I can justify it. The quantity of time doesn't insure quality, anyway. You know yourself that out of a 55 minute period you don't always get 55 minutes of quality. To have done what we did here in this project would have taken years ...we may never have done it. But because we were given the time to sit down within the day and plan together, we have proved without a shadow of a doubt what teachers could do.

Teacher empowerment and principal empowerment

What did the teachers at Orchards accomplish because of teacher leadership of the MIL project? An important change was the formation of the school's committee structure. The faculty designed four committees--teacher-to-student, teacher-to-teacher, teacher-to-administrator and teacher-to-community. The committees facilitated a decision making process that covered a broad, school-wide spectrum of needs. One committee's product was a teacher-written document spelling out agreed-upon areas for faculty involvement.

Another innovation, "teacher-convened" faculty meetings offered insights regarding Gayle's style of leadership and its reflection in the way the teachers developed their own styles. Some teachers were uncomfortable about convening (leading) faculty meetings, "but we have all practiced and we have all done it." One refreshing comment alluded to the collegial informality of the four committees: "We have [committee chairs], but we don't use them much."

A significant outcome of the project at Orchards was the principal's willingness to risk changes in his role that came from the empowerment of teachers' roles. He admitted that it wasn't easy explaining to fellow principals that he hadn't given away his authority--or as he put it, "the keys to the building." On occasion, he had to say, "I am sorry, but I cannot live with what you are suggesting and we cannot do that." And a mutual trust and cooperation prevailed. The principal did admit that he

had been surprised and even somewhat uncomfortable by some aspects of the teacher-initiated committee structure; for instance, the teacher-to-administrator committee came up with guidelines for principal evaluation, but he actually found it a positive experience. Some of the deepest feelings I encountered in this study came out in this principal's final interview. He volunteered that, as a result of this teacher-led project, he himself "had never felt more empowered"--it was simply easier to things to get done. He allowed me to share that remark with Gayle. Her reply was both matter-of-fact and right at the heart of the matter:

If he had asked us to do some of these things, we would never have done them. But now, deciding ourselves what we want to do, we do it ourselves. Just ask the people in the trenches and they will tell you how to restructure...."

Findings: Different views and common themes

Certain common themes emerged from this inquiry, although teacher leaders thought about and talked about empowerment and leadership in different ways. According to Nathan (Maryvale) empowerment was the ability to make decisions about curriculum and other matters close to his work with students. Kat (Willow Creek) saw her leadership as empowered by "working with others who will share and team". Jim (Willow Creek) looked at teachers' lack of empowerment in that their "hands were tied" in gaining certain roles. Gayle (Orchards) said she "learned" leadership

and confidence through working with the teacher association, stressing the importance of "information".

Common themes

Four common themes emerged from these interviews and observations: 1) Time and teacher leadership; 2) Effects of teaching mission and leadership upon one another; 3) Teacher leadership and collegial relationships; 4) Differences between teacher leadership and administration. Following are some of the different views held by the MIL teacher leaders on these themes.

Time and teacher leadership

Nathan wanted leadership that will address the mechanistic way teacher time is used with "everybody plugged into a slot every period of the day" and that will find teachers the time to develop the curriculum that they are responsible for teaching.

Kat mentioned the tensions of managing and balancing time between teaching and leadership tasks. Jim said there has to be a "different way to look at time," calling it an "essential" that teachers had no ability to control.

Gayle was convinced of the need for a restructured school day that would allow teacher leaders appropriate time for both teaching and leadership.

Effect of teaching mission and leadership upon one another

Nathan felt that Julia's leadership lacked credibility because she was no longer teaching. Only teachers, he thought, can understand the kind of leadership other teachers see as necessary for real impact on teaching and learning.

Kat's teaching was enhanced by her leadership role, and her leadership strengthened among her colleagues by her active classroom role. Jim was interested in leading teachers to share their thoughts about teaching in ways that will change schools.

Gayle knew that an essential for leading restructured schools was the ability to understand and respect teaching and teachers. She clearly felt good about her colleagues and her profession.

Teacher leadership and collegial relations

Nathan believed that the abilities to sense faculty-wide needs, build consensus, and articulate visions that teachers find valid are qualities best found in leaders whose primary role is classroom teaching. Beth (Maryvale) began her new leadership with an appreciation of career teachers, their viewpoints and their value--and of her own teaching role.

Kat expressed real concern for the hurt that Willow Creek teachers felt when they first began to speak their minds and question each other about deeply held beliefs. Jim sympathized with the image of indifference that teachers suffered when, in fact, their interest in leadership was overwhelmed by the demands of a unrealistic school schedule.

Gayle's leadership acknowledged and accepted teacher differences through a committee structure that allowed teachers to participate in school change according to their varying skills and interests.

Differences in teacher leadership and administration

Julia's vision of leadership was based more on managerial and controlling aspects of power than on influence acquired through shared understandings and collegial respect. Her replacement, Beth, was keenly aware of the negative connotations teachers attached to administrative control; she appreciated teachers' preference for determining their own needs.

Kat found that administrative training and leadership styles did not fit with teacher beliefs, and that leadership roles which took teachers out of teaching were neither desirable nor in touch with what really happens in schools. Jim spoke of the conflict forced on teachers who felt they had to leave the classroom for the authority and power of administrative positions.

Gayle flatly stated "I would never be an administrator," and saw the need for a development program specifically for teachers that prepared them for new kinds of leadership roles allowing them to retain their mission as classroom teachers.

Conclusions

Even with different views and working in different contexts, teacher leaders have been thinking common thoughts and expressing common concerns about school leadership in general, and their own leadership roles in particular. They are eager to share their views, to test their ideas and to admit their needs to develop further knowledge and skills in this new area of leadership.

There are not presently widespread resources for facilitating this kind of dialogue or for offering the kind of

information and training that teacher leaders say they need: opportunities for study, reflection and collegial response regarding the new roles and responsibilities they are increasingly assuming in addition to their classroom work. They need a means for further development of their leadership and an audience for their views.

As school restructuring becomes more than a theoretical response to our nation's educational problems, it will call for exploration, development and support of this new role and, above all, for a revaluing of its practitioners:

Once teachers "try on" leadership, they find that it fits them like a glove. As teachers become leaders, they come to view themselves as serious theoreticians as well as capable practitioners, as contributors to a collaborative process as well as individuals in classrooms, and as major decision makers in the educational process as well as implementors of programs. They come to value themselves and ... each other; in so doing, they transform the professional culture in which they work (Miller, 1988, p. 172).

Recommendations

Two recommendations follow these conclusions:

1) Study of teacher leadership should be increased and should directly involve teacher leaders themselves. Common themes expressed by emerging teacher leaders need to be shared and tested with other school leaders, especially interested principals. Thus, conscious constructions of a new paradigm for leadership in schools can be built and shared with practitioners across the nation to adapt to their own situations and their own students.

2) A formal effort must be made to design professional development programs for practicing and aspiring teacher leaders, based on their needs and the needs of faculties in schools attempting to restructure the ways they are organized and governed for teaching and learning.

Final note

These recommendations are under consideration by an Indiana University team of teachers and professors who have received a Lilly Endowment planning grant for developing a Leadership Institute for the Future of Teaching (LIFT).

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